



2016 World Day to Combat Desertification (WDCD)

Concept note

Theme: Inclusive cooperation for achieving Land Degradation Neutrality

Slogan: Protect Earth. Restore Land. Engage People.

Introduction

There is probably no greater issue than land in the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals that touches everyone. From the food we eat, to the clothes we wear and the houses we live – it all stems from land resources. In order to “leave no one behind” as proclaimed in the new Sustainable Development Goals, achieving land degradation neutrality needs to be in the forefront to meet our requirements and develop sustainability.

However, leaving no one behind is an enormous challenge that sustainable land management practice alone, nor any other single discipline, can solve. The issue needs to be viewed hand-in-hand with structural change in social, economic and environmental development embedded in other SDGs such as education, trade, employment and gender equality. In order for the impoverished to reap the benefits in pursuit of the new SDGs, we will need a new way of thinking to achieve an open and inclusive cooperation among all stakeholders - ministries, different sectors, countries and regions. The capability of the international community will be tested by its ability to successfully connect the new development agenda in a coherent and synergistic way.

With this interconnected structure, this year’s World Day to Combat Desertification advocates for the importance of inclusive cooperation to restore and rehabilitate degraded land and contribute towards achieving the overall Sustainable Development Goals. Land has been an overlooked component in sustainable development for years. Now, we view land as a vital link to provide solutions to cope with many other development challenges such as climate change, secure water and energy resources, promoting inclusive growth, and so on.

Theme and slogan

Inclusive cooperation among all actors is key for making Land Degradation Neutrality a fundamental solution for achieving SDGs. The slogan, “**Protect Earth. Restore Land. Engage People.**” addresses the importance of comprehensive participation and cooperation in working towards achieving Land Degradation Neutrality.

With the theme and slogan we are sending the following messages:

- (1) “To combat desertification, and restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land-degradation neutral world” is one of the Sustainable Development Goals to be achieved by 2030;
- (2) Land Degradation Neutrality cannot be achieved without inclusive cooperation among all the actors working towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. And by involving all actors, LDN provide additional benefits to achieving other SDGs.
- (3) With the costs of land restoration in the range of 150 dollars a hectare, achieving LDN is one of the most cost-effective ways not only to fight against hunger but also to cope with climate change, secure water and energy resources and promote inclusive growth.

Global observance

The global observance event on 17 June 2016 will be held in Beijing, China, hosted by the State Forestry Administration of China (SFA). In 2013, China embarked on the new development strategy, “The Belt and Road,” aiming to strengthen cooperation among countries primarily in Eurasia. Since then, it has been promoting green and low-carbon infrastructure construction in cooperation with the neighboring countries connected by the historic Silk Road. The country has accelerated its pace to facilitate construction of ecological civilization and to reduce carbon emissions since the President Xi Jinping’s announcement in 2014.

China’s effort for green development in cooperation with other nations would be a significant movement not only for combating desertification and climate change but also for promoting green economy in pursuit of equitable economic and social development. By organizing the global observance in China, the 2016 WDCD will demonstrate how Land Degradation Neutrality can be a critical element for achieving other sustainable development goals, especially for promotion of inclusive and sustainable economic growth. At the global observance, the host country will announce the “One Belt and One Road Joint Action to Combating Desertification Initiative” together with interested countries and stakeholders.

Before 17 June, there will be a series of campaigns to promote the World Day to Combat Desertification around the world. Anyone who is celebrating the Day is encouraged to inform the UNCCD secretariat by email WDCD2016@unccd.int so that they can shared and promoted through various media channels.